

Kearny Mesa

8.1.5



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8.1.5.a *Cubic (U 19)*

Site Description and Existing Conditions

Cubic (U 19) is a 13.5-acre site located between Highways 52 and 163 at the northeastern terminus of Kearny Mesa Road in Kearny Mesa. This privately-owned parcel is outside the MHPA and is not conserved. The site is zoned Industrial and Business Parks, and surrounding land uses include military, transportation, and industrial.

Twenty-eight natural vernal pools (1,827 m² basin area [0.451 acres]) were mapped at Cubic. Redding gravelly loam underlies the vernal pools, which are surrounded by disturbed coastal sage scrub and chamise chaparral. *E. aristulatum*, *P. abramsii* and *Branchinecta* spp. were present in 2003.

Although considered separately here due to ownership and conservation status, the Cubic site is geographically related to vernal pools at SANDER, Magnatron and MCAS Miramar.

In 1981, portions of the site were graded prior to obtaining development permits; however, the site was visited by City staff on March 2, 1981, and it was determined that the actions were not in violation of the land development ordinance. The Cubic site was identified by the adopted Recovery Plan for Vernal Pools of Southern California (USFWS, 1998) as a necessary for the reclassification of the following endangered and threatened species: *E. aristulatum*, *P. abramsii*, *O. californica* and *B. sandiegonensis*.

Threats

Development

Cubic is privately-owned, un-conserved and located outside of the MHPA, and may be impacted by development.

Invasive Species

Invasive species, particularly grasses, occur in both upland and vernal pool habitats at Cubic.

Trespass

Trespass is generally limited to foot traffic, although the area was impacted by off-road vehicles and grading historically.

Litter

The site may be impacted by wind-blown trash and litter from trespassers.

Fire and Fire Suppression

The Cubic vernal pools are located between MCAS Miramar and business park developments. The site could serve as a staging area in the event of a fire at Miramar, and the developed nature of the surrounding area would necessitate stringent fire-fighting measures.

Current Management Activities

No management activities are planned or currently underway.

Management Recommendations

Due to the presence of vernal pools and to the “Necessary to Declassify” designation by the USFWS Recovery Plan, this site is recommended for conservation through public acquisition or private mitigation. The site is also nearby large military open space areas and within 0.6 km of the SANDER vernal pool site. However, development is not precluded; if all or portions of the site are conserved through acquisition or on-site mitigation for development, the following recommendations shall be implemented.

Restoration and/or enhancement of the vernal pools are appropriate given the high species diversity recorded historically at nearby vernal pool sites, and to restore areas disturbed by grading in 1981. Restoration and/or enhancement actions should be focused on creating stable populations of *E. aristulatum*, *P. abramsii*, *O. californica* and *B. sandiegonensis*, in accordance with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Plan.

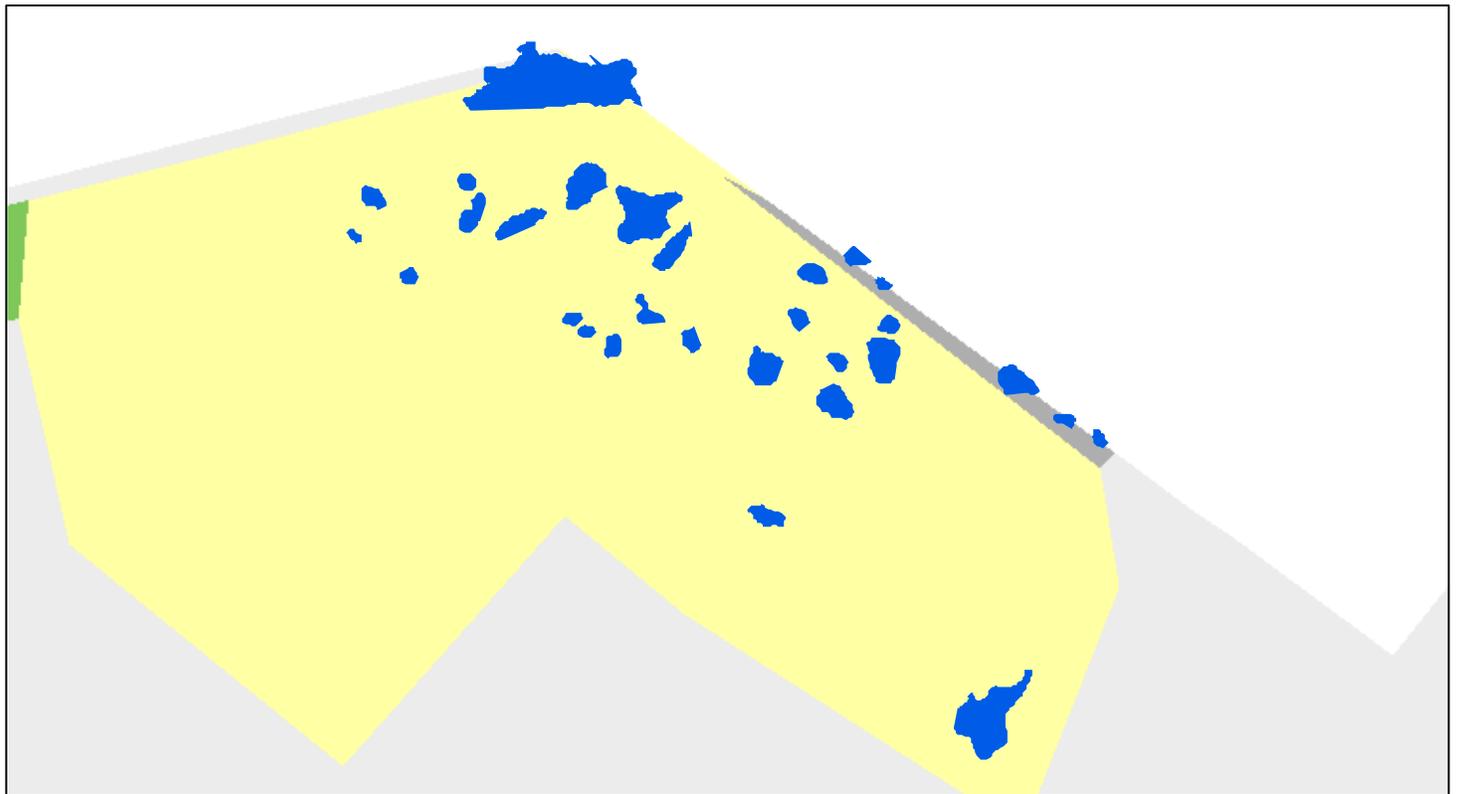
Fencing shall be installed to preclude access and appropriate signage shall be developed with both educational and no-trespassing elements. Annual maintenance shall be required to provide fence and sign repair and trash removal, as necessary.

A qualified biologist shall assess the site for non-native, invasive species, and shall recommend and implement a removal plan, if necessary. If weed control is deemed necessary, weeding within and immediately adjacent to vernal pools should be done by hand. In upland, mechanical removal may be necessary, however, herbicides should not be used in or adjacent to vernal pools.

An endowment fund shall be established to fund management and maintenance activities in perpetuity.

The land use zone shall be changed from Industrial to Open Space. If the site is used for mitigation, a fire management plan shall be prepared and included in the adopted Habitat Management Plan.

Figure 25



Cubic (U 19)



0.02 Miles
0.06 Kilometers

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Roads | Chaparral |
| MHPA | Grassland |
| Conserved Lands | Disturbed Land |
| Vernal Pools at Site | Urban/Developed |
| Adjacent Vernal Pools | No Data |

Note: MHPA and Roads not shown in top map; vegetation mapping per Ogden 1997.

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8.1.5.b *Miramar Landfill Easement (U North W 1-4)*

Site Description and Existing Conditions

The Miramar Landfill Easement (U North W 1-4) vernal pool site is located on 1,424 acres leased and managed by the City of San Diego Environmental Services Department. This area is located east of Interstate 805, west of Miramar Mounds National Natural Landmark, south of the MCAS Miramar airstrip, and north of State Route 52. Although on-site resources are fenced and signed for protection, the site is not considered conserved. It is not within the MHPA or the MSCP due to the underlying fee ownership of the U.S. military.

Approximately 24 vernal pools were recorded at Miramar Landfill, which are documented in the Vernal Pool Management Plan (City of San Diego, 1996). This site was not re-mapped during 2003 due to its occurrence outside the MSCP study area. Soils include loams from the Chesterton and Redding series. Upland vegetation is characterized by chamise chaparral and non-native annual grasses, and the vernal pools support populations of *E. aristulatum*, *P. abramsii*, and *B. sandiegonensis*.

Portions of this site are currently used as a landfill, while additional areas have been capped. The capped areas have been revegetated with coastal sage scrub, and large areas of the site burned in 2003.

Several management actions recommended by the City of San Diego Vernal Pool Management Plan (1996) have been accomplished. The 1996 document suggested suppression of dust and erosion control, monitoring/adjusting landfill operations, inspection of physical and biological conditions, and evaluation of restoration potential. These activities are conducted by staff biologists and resource managers at the Miramar Landfill.

Threats

Invasive Species

Non-native grasses are pervasive at this site, and have increased following the 2003 fires.

Fire/Fire Suppression

Miramar Landfill is adjacent to MCAS Miramar, which includes large undeveloped areas where fire plays an important part in the natural ecologic regime. Portions of the site burned most recently in 2003, and comparison of pre- and post-fire surveys at the nearby Mission Trails Regional Park site does not appear to reveal damage to sensitive species or their physical habitat. However, an increase in non-native annual grasses has been noted.

Trespass

As noted in the Vernal Pool Management Plan (City of San Diego, 1996), illegal trespass activities may disturb this area. Given the highly restricted access to military lands, this threat is relatively low compared to sites without similar fencing and patrols.

Development

As noted in the Vernal Pool Management Plan (City of San Diego, 1996), portions of the site were developed under the General Development Plan. There are no current plans for additional development that would impact vernal pools.

Emergency Procedures

As noted in the Vernal Pool Management Plan (City of San Diego, 1996), vernal pools may be impacted in the unlikely event of a crash landing at MCAS Miramar.

Siltation

As noted in the Vernal Pool Management Plan (City of San Diego, 1996), vernal pools near roadways may be impacted by siltation.

Current Management Activities

The site is currently managed for the use and safety of the Miramar Landfill by the Environmental Services Department of the City of San Diego.

Fencing and signage are maintained around the entire site to minimize trespass/disturbance to landfill operations, as well as location-specific signage and fencing for protection of environmentally sensitive areas, including vernal pools.

Siltation is addressed through a dust suppression program and best management practices for both construction and standard operations. These include scheduled wetting of surfaces, runoff control, silt fences and detention basins.

The Environmental Services Department has dedicated environmental staff, including biologists, to conduct monitoring, management, salvage and restoration projects as necessary at Miramar Landfill.

Access to the area supporting vernal pools is limited by the Water Department, which provides patrols, fencing, and signage.

Management Recommendations

The Vernal Pool Management Plan (City of San Diego, 1996) made the following recommendations: Continue dust suppression/erosion control programs, restore areas of impact in the event of an airplane crash, continue to monitor and adjust landfill operations as necessary at the recommendation of staff biologists, continue to inspect environmental/biological conditions and provide associated reports, restore disturbed areas when recommended by staff biologists, evaluate vernal pool restoration potential, evaluate expansion of the sludge processing site management plan to greater portions of the site, and notify appropriate City departments and entities if new development is proposed.

The first three recommendations are a continuation of existing practices, while the remaining issues refer to on-going evaluation of the site by staff biologist. Restoration of disturbed areas, where appropriate, and the minimization of disturbance from surrounding development should continue to be management priorities. To maintain the condition of the area, the site manager should continue to limit access through gates, fencing and patrols.

Restoration and reintroduction efforts should utilize seeds from within the smallest possible geographic range, in the following order, as necessary: complex, series, geographic region (i.e. Otay Mesa).

Non-native grasses have invaded much of the watershed area at Miramar. Enhancement and/or restoration efforts may benefit through inclusion of a weed eradication program to restore native species composition around the vernal pools.

This site was identified as necessary to stabilize the populations of *E. aristulatum*, *Pogogyne abramsii*, *Orcuttia californica*, and *Branchinecta sandiegonensis* by the adopted *Recovery Plan for Vernal Pools of Southern California* (USFWS, 1998). All management activities should promote the stabilization and recovery of these species.

Figure 26



Miramar Landfill Easement (U North, W 1-4)



0.1 Miles
0.25 Kilometers

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Roads | Coastal Sage Scrub |
| MHPA | Chaparral |
| Conserved Lands | Disturbed Land |
| Vernal Pools at Site | Urban/Developed |
| Adjacent Vernal Pools | Military - No Data |

Note: Vernal pools at this location not GPSed during the 2002-2003 Inventory Surveys. Military vegetation data not available.

MHPA and Roads not shown in top map; vegetation mapping per Ogden 1997.

8.1.5.c *Magnatron (U 15)*

Site Description and Existing Conditions

Magnatron (U 15) is located on a City-owned parcel west of the intersection of Magnatron Boulevard and SR 163. The one-acre site is managed by the Real Estate Assets Department and is not conserved. Magnatron is outside the MHPA and is zoned for Industrial Parks. Surrounding land uses include transportation, office and industrial parks, and undeveloped land.

The basin (1.3 m² [14,718.8 ft²]) at Magnatron is in an area of historic vernal pools. However, the *Vernal Pool Management Plan* (City of San Diego, 2004) states: Alterations to the site and surrounding drainages have resulted in major changes to the hydrology of the site. Although ponding still occurs on the site, vernal pool characteristics (hydrology, soil, and vegetation) have been destroyed.

Run-off and grading from nearby development continues to alter hydrology and vegetation, and only six vernal pool indicator species were located during 2003 (no sensitive species) while the majority of the vegetation was better classified as facultative wetland species. The basin is surrounded by disturbed chamise chaparral underlain with Redding gravelly loam.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued a compliance order (Docket No. CWA 404-09a-94-005) for findings of violation. Mitigation was provided on 1.2 acres in the southeast portion of the Winterwood site, and the violation case has been closed. Refer to the *Winterwood Park Vernal Pool Restoration and Preservation Plan* (RECON 1996) for additional information.

Threats

Development

This site is owned by the City of San Diego Real Estate Assets Department and is zoned for Industrial Parks. It is outside the MHPA and is not conserved.

Invasive Species

Invasive species have been introduced from nearby developments.

Edge Effects

The site is adjacent to roadways and industrial developments. Impacts may occur from unauthorized access, trash, etc., although these may be minimized to some degree by existing fencing.

Fire and Fire Suppression

Given the developed surroundings, it is unlikely that wildfire or fire suppression activities pose a threat to the Magnatron site.

Required Activities

Mitigation for impacts was required by EPA compliance order CWA 404-09a-94-005. These requirements have been satisfactorily completed at the Winterwood site.

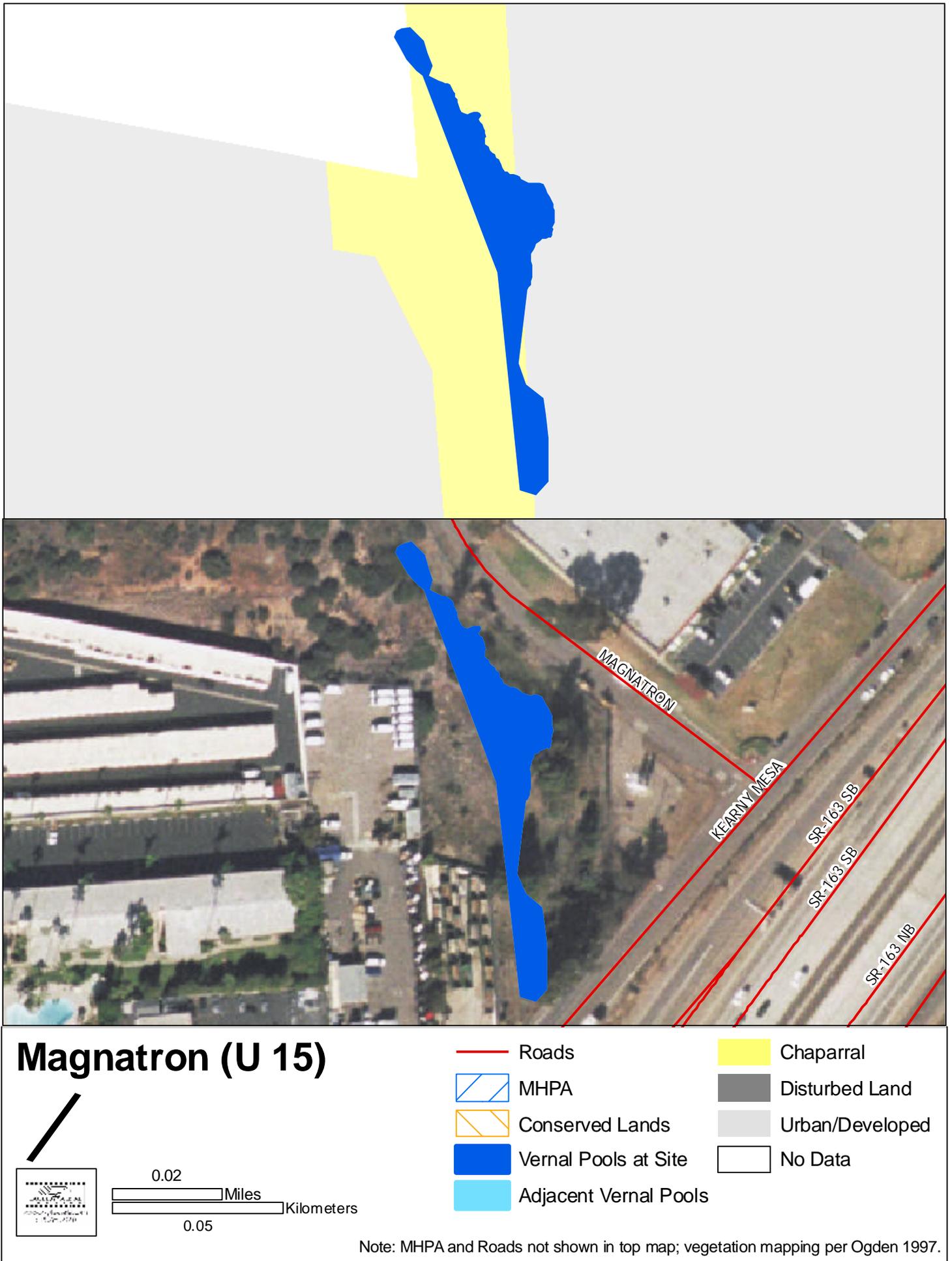
Management Recommendations

The existing fencing should be repaired as necessary to minimize edge effects. Trash removal should also occur as needed.

If it is determined that active management is necessary, it is recommended that volunteers and/or “Friends” groups be utilized for species surveys, litter patrols, weeding, etc. Due to the sensitivity of the habitats, adequate training shall be provided and crews shall be supervised by a qualified biologist.

If the site is preserved, the underlying zone should be changed from Industrial to Open Space, and the land designated or dedicated through the Park and Recreation Department.

Figure 27



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